



Indochina Resource Center

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Dear Pat and Dan,

How are you? The reason I'm writing is that I've been invited to visit PRG zones, traveling through North Vietnam. I'll be arriving in Hanoi December 23, staying 2 weeks, then spending a few more weeks in Laos and Thailand, returning home in time to address a nation-wide Assembly on Indochina at the end of January.

On the trip, I hope also to visit the liberated zones of Laos which, if it comes off, will be only the second visit by an American in the history of the Laotian war. My work is known to Laotian leaders like Prince Souphanouvong and Phoumi Vongvichit, for whom we organized that reception at the U.N. a few months back, and I hope I'll be able to get some exclusive interviews and visits.

I think the trip will be a significant one. At my suggestion, the Vietnamese also invited Frances Fitzgerald, with whom I'm friendly. She'll be writing a piece for The New Yorker, and her presence in North Vietnam will, I think, both attract some attention and encourage added "normalization" of U.S. views of the North Vietnamese.

David Marr and Gary Porter, the two leading American scholars on Vietnam, will also be going. Their output from this trip will be felt for years, both through their own output and the effect their knowledge will have on both Frankie and myself. Both of them have come up with any number of creative ideas never before done on such visits, from visiting archaeological sites to seeing the PRG in action through such things as accompanying a Primary School Inspector on his visits to schools. (Both also speak Vietnamese.)

In short, the trip should have both significant long-term and short-term impact. I have found that on my return from such trips I've been able to get on TV and radio, publish articles, go on speaking tours, brief congressional offices and reporters to a significant degree. (Other potential projects we're exploring range from a sequel to Voices From the Plain of Jars focusing not on the bombs but on the people's lives, to a mass paper-back entitled something like Who Are The Viet-Cong? to arranging future trips for Congressmen.)

One of the other most important products of this trip will be renewing contacts out there with journalists, old friends, etc. The articles, letters, documents, these people send us throughout the years are crucial to the success of our work here at the Center.

My only problem right now is obtaining the \$2000 necessary for the trip. As you know, we only take \$80/week subsistence salaries here so as to devote as much of our funds as possible to our work. This means that when special projects like this trip come up, we don't have any reserve funds to pay for them.

I remembered your kind offer a few years back to donate some funds to help me get around the country to speak. Since going on this trip to PRG zones and Laos will enable me to have the same kind of public impact on my return, it occurred to me to include you among a few friends I'm writing to see if they'd be able to donate \$500 for ~~the~~ trip. (Tax-exempt, through The United Methodist Church - Board of Church and Society.)

Needless to say, I hate to have to ask close friends like yourself for this kind of help and if things are tight now or you have higher priorities, of course I'll understand. Whatever proves possible, it will of course have no impact on the affection I feel for both of you.

I look forward very much to seeing you ~~both~~ again.

Sincerely,



(Branfman)

P.S. If there's anything I can do for you on this ~~trip~~, any letters or whatever you'd like to get to anyone out there, or whatever, just let me know.

P.P.S. If Christy didn't get through to you yet, I'm quite anxious to get the exact quote from Kissinger you used so effectively in your speech here, with the reference - date.